

Washington, DC — Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) today issued the following statement regarding President Bush's visit to Oregon. The President arrives in Portland Thursday to appear at a fundraising lunch, then travels to Central Oregon to tout the virtues of selective logging as a way to stave off wildfires. The visit comes as Congress is considering legislation that would ease environmental reviews and appeals in an effort to increase thinning on up to 20 million acres of fire-prone federal forests.

"Oregonians are tired of the Bush administration's self-serving attempts to put politics above sound environmental policy," Blumenauer said. "The President's Healthy Forests Initiative is likely to fuel distrust and detract from effective forest management, just as Karl Rove's recent meddling in the Klamath Basin has undermined bi-partisan efforts to resolve water shortages there.

"The Administration has also cut all funding for Urban Parks and Recreation, which has helped create, renovate, and rehabilitate local urban parks and recreation facilities such as Ankeny Park and South Park in Downtown Portland, the Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center, and the University Park Community Center. In addition, the Administration's decision to eliminate funding for the McCormick and Baxter Superfund site has slowed the City of Portland's efforts to restore the health of the Willamette River to a mere trickle.

"Finally, I am deeply disappointed at the President's continued disregard for the economic crisis facing our state. Since President Bush took office in January, 2001, Oregon has lost 50,800 jobs. Our 8.1% unemployment rate is the highest in the nation. Thousands of aging, disadvantaged, and poor Oregonians are losing access to critical social services because of federal funding cuts. The Bush administration has failed in its commitment to Oregonians for hometown security, healthcare, jobs, social services, and education. Oregonians deserve better than a President who comes to town only to raise money for re-election when so many people here are struggling to make ends meet."